

The Calming Tuning Forks

As requested by the Lord Peter Wyndham-Smythe on the twenty third night of March in bequest of Baron Von Munchausen to one Lady Katerina du Barbershoppe. Being transcripts of some merit.

Lady Katerina du Barbershoppe, perhaps you could tell of the time, with nothing but a tuning fork, you were able to stop the riots of the natives in Louisiana by forming a choral group?

I don't like to boast about that sort of thing, of course. It was a very odd situation, really. I don't like visiting the New World very much. It's full of all the most frightful appalling people. But there I was because all of my racing vultures had died of the cold and I was really looking for some replacements. I was thinking maybe condors or something like that. So there I was, wandering about the wilds of Louisiana with my normal accoutrements - a number of tuning forks, hat box, you know.

Captain Sir Robert: I understand that the natural bird song of the native Louisiana condor is in fact the most beautiful in all the world.

You're quite right there, actually. It's another factor in taking up racing condors- I thought that my barbershop group would enjoy working with the condors. I had this vision of four little condors in a row just singing their beautiful harmonies. Really, it's just angelic. I was wandering through the wilds of Louisiana, looking for condors...

Lord Peter: It must have been particularly difficult as condors subsist entirely on a diet of lard, which had been in short supply recently in Louisiana

Hon. Hyacinth: Due to a French Revulsion.

Curse them all, the terrible French. In fact the native uprising in Louisiana had been causing many problems with lard supply as well. Not only were they not getting their normal lard deliveries from France, but the natives were grabbing what lard supplies there were and burning them! To make huge stinky bonfires. They were hoping to drive the white man from their shores.

So there I was, with my tuning fork...

Lady Floria: Was this not a the time of the great Tuning Fork Strike? So wasn't it in fact difficult to get the tuning fork to work during this period?

It was a bit. Of course I do also prefer to grease up my tuning fork with lard as well, which was quite an issue. Otherwise you start to get rust. It was extremely hard to get my tuning fork to sing out.

Hon. Hyacinth: Don't you find that a tuning fork sounds at its best when kept in a sweet potato skin?

Well, that can be a way to preserve the tone. I actually prefer a regular or common potato over the sweet potato. I know a lot of people will argue with me about that - but I find a nice coating of lard, a lovely encasement of potato and you would not believe the tone you can get out of your tuning fork as a result of that. I was having a great deal of trouble getting my tuning fork to sing out, as established before the darn thing was on strike. I then came across these natives, burning the lard I needed for my tuning fork. So I went straight up to the first native that I saw, and I said, "Native, stop!". The native did immediately recognise my *je ne c'est quoi...*

Baron Celsius: The native recognised your tuning fork I would imagine?

Possibly yes, I did kind of poke him in the eye with it.

Baronet Clive: I was under the impression that the tuning fork is a relative of the mermaid, which hunts in packs. After poking them in the eye, how do you stop it from eating the entire native?

The tuning fork is a tame beast. Through the greasing with the lard, the storing in the potato, it soothes the tuning fork.

Lord Peter: It's so tame in fact, it's unionised.

Indeed, and when you get 4 or 5 tuning forks together in a box in their potato skin, they tend to form unions. Which is a terrible, terrible thing. Very common, I find. I was poking the natives in the eye when I discovered that the content of the native eye is actually better than lard. So my tuning fork began to sing out and I was able to strike one of the natives on the head and the [sung note] seemed to hypnotise them. They all went [dazed expression]. So I formed them all up into four groups - the basses, the tenors, the leads, the baritones which are the superior part of the barbershop chorus. Through the hypnosis they began to sing together.

Lady Floria: I imagine there must have been some problem with the tone deaf natives refusing to fall into line.

Initially there was, but you would be quite surprised what a good poke in the eye... There were a couple that were still problematic, but I poked them in the ear and they went away and had a bit of a lie down. That calmed that part of the populace as well, as well as the actual choral singing.

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